

Every Child Learning Every Day



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An early childhood newsletter from the State Department of Education

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READY TO LEARN

What would you do if you woke up with antlers?

Idaho teachers have shared some of their favorite books and activities for children as part of Superintendent of Public Instruction Marilyn Howard's "Dinner and a Book" initiative.

This month's suggestion was submitted by Linda Dixon, a second-grade teacher at East Canyon Elementary School, Nampa, Val-luue School District.

Book: "Imogene's Antlers," by David Small

Story synopsis: Imogene is a young girl who doesn't let anything bother her even if she wakes up one day with antlers. Her antlers provide Imogene with many interesting experiences

Activity: Ask child to describe the purpose of antlers. What would you do if you woke up and discovered you had antlers? Activity - Make your own set of antlers. Put anything you want on the antlers (pick one theme to stick with. Example: fruits, sports.)

Related books/topics: "Animals Should Definitely Act Like People," by Judi Barnett and "The Little Rabbit Who Wanted Red Wings," by Carolyn Bailey.

HARRY POTTER WINNERS

Congratulations to Valerie Wasia of Blackfoot and Kelly Kirk of Boise, who entered our contest to win a set of Harry Potter books.



Teaching caring begins early

Dear Reader:

Just as the foundations for such skills as reading and math are built in the earliest years of life, the same is true for building character.

Researchers say that sometime after the first year, children often begin to exercise "proactive" compassion — a toddler offers a cookie to another who is upset or comforts a crying baby.

The action of adults in children's lives help them begin to develop important character traits: empathy, compassion, caring, charity, gratitude.

According to "What Makes Children Care?" by American Psychological Association, parents and other adults can let the children know how much it means that they behave with kindness and responsibility.



Dr. Marilyn Howard
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Here are some of their suggestions:

****Talk with children** about treating others with respect,

FAMILY VOLUNTEERISM

The Points of Light Foundation offers information on opportunities and ideas for family to volunteer at www.familycares.org.

****Model caring and** compassionate behavior toward others, and as a family routine.

****Be honest with children** about the behavior you expect.

****Surround your children** with people who are also compassionate.

The holiday season offers an opportunity to take stock of the activities that nurture the character of our children.

Marilyn Howard

READY TO LEARN

Share your childhood favorites with kids

Sharing a favorite story is a way of sharing love. Do you remember your favorite book when you were a child?

December is a great time to see if you can locate a copy and share it with your child. A favorite story is a treasure.

Don't be concerned if your child wants to hear the same story over and over again.

Rereading stories builds confidence and, as your child becomes more familiar with a story, he or she may join in and read along with you.

Your child may begin to "read" to you, imitating your expression and making up words. This is good practice and shows that they understand how books work.

Very young children, even toddlers, can develop a sense of what educators call



concepts of print.

When you sit down with your child, help him or her find the front of

the book and the back of the book. Let your child turn the pages. Find the title and the author on the cover. Point to the words as you read.

This will help them understand that text runs from left to right.

Rereading stories can also help build concepts like sequence.

For example see if after you read the story they can tell you what happened first, next and then finally.

Set aside a quiet, consistent time to share a book every day. The memories will last a lifetime

READING STANDARDS

Each month, the Early Childhood Newsletter focuses on a preschool reading or language arts standard.

This month's standard is "Read a variety of traditional, technical, and electronic materials for critical analysis and evaluation."

The knowledge and skills that make up this standard include

****Beginning to develop a** sense of what a story is.

****Beginning to understand** the meaning of a story.

Parents and early childhood care providers may support this standard by:

**** asking children to predict** the outcome of familiar stories, and retell the story or recall information about the story.

****Asking the children to tell** stories about a pet, a trip, or a pretend event. Extend the story by asking, "What comes next?" or by writing the story on paper for the child to illustrate.



RESOURCES

Consider safety when selecting toys

Idaho's Early Childhood Clearinghouse offers these tips for safe toy selection:

The most important thing to do is to read the label.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission requires toy manufacturers to meet stringent safety standards and to label certain toys that could be a hazard for younger children.

Look for labels that give age recommendations and use that information as a guide. Labels on toys that state "not recommended for children under three ... contains small parts," are labeled that way because they may pose a choking hazard to children under three.

Toys should be developmentally appropriate to suit the skills, abilities and interests of the child.

The U.S. consumer Product Safety commission also has guidelines:

****Choose toys with the child's age, interests and skill level in mind.**

****Look for and heed age recommendations, such as "Not recommended for children under 3."**

****For children younger than 3, avoid balls that have a diameter of 1.75 inches or less.**

****Avoid toys with sharp edges and points.**

****Avoid toys made with thin, brittle plastic that might easily break into small pieces or leave jagged edges.**

****Note that toys with long cords or strings can become wrapped around a child's neck, causing strangulation.**

****If there is more than one child in the house, make sure toys for older children are appropriate for the youngest child.**



The Department of Health and Welfare offers an excellent website called the "Early Childhood Clearinghouse," it is located at www2.state.id.us/dhw/ecic/home.htm

NUTRITION

Cranberries are an American tradition

Native Americans who lived in North America long before Europeans arrived realized there was something special about the

blood-red berries they found growing in wild bogs.

Cranberries were used as foods, dyes, and medicine.

Cranberries are packed with antioxidants and other natural compounds and are a great choice for the health conscious consumer. Raw cranberries are a good source of fiber. Cranberries are available in a wide variety



MORE ON CRANBERRIES

Visit: www.cranberries.org

ety of forms in fruit, juice, sauce, and dried. Fresh cranberries are generally available from September to December. Here's a recipe to try:

Classic Cranberry Nut Bread

2 cups flour
1 cup sugar
1½ teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
¾ cup orange juice
1 tablespoon grated orange peel
2 tablespoons shortening

1 egg, well beaten
1 ½ Ocean Spray® Fresh or Frozen Cranberries, coarsely chopped
½ chopped nuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9 X 5 inch loaf pan

Mix together flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and baking soda in a medium mixing bowl. Stir in orange juice, orange peel, shortening and egg. Mix until well blended. Stir in cranberries and nuts. Spread evenly in loaf pan.

Bake for 55 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool on a rack for 15 minutes.

Remove from pan; cool completely. Wrap and store overnight.

Makes 1 loaf (16 slices).

READY TO LEARN

Counting anything and everything counts

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics offers simple tips to help parents help children understand math. **This month's skill — Number sense and numeration.**

Number sense is much more than merely counting; it involves the ability to think and work with numbers easily and to understand their uses and relationships. Number sense is about understanding the different uses for numbers (describe quantities and relationships, informational tools).

It is about counting, adding, and subtracting.



Counting and becoming familiar with numbers will help your children understand other aspects of math.

What adults can do: Count anything and everything! Count real things to help children use their own experience with objects to better understand numbers. Therefore, one of the best activities to do with children is to have them count real objects.

Point out that counting lets them know how many things there are in a group. Point to the object as you recite each number name. Use fingers to count. Help your children count without skipping numbers or counting something twice.

Talk to children about what numbers are used for, such as keeping score in a game, or finding an apartment or street address.

ACTIVITIES

Locations, directions build geography skills

Young children learn through their senses and experiences. They touch, feel, smell, and taste things. They run and jump and climb.

Children's everyday play and experiences give them the basis for the geographic knowledge that they will learn in school. With just a little encouragement and some direction, young children will develop the vocabulary, awareness, and curiosity that will help them better understand and learn geography.

Below are activities for young children:

Ages 2-3

****Give toddlers a lot of opportunities to run about and explore their environment. Babies love to play "so big."**

When you ask them how big they are they raise their hands over their heads and everyone says, "so big." When they are older, ask toddlers to make themselves very tall or very small by standing on tip toes, or stooping down.

****Have toddlers play at moving in different directions, such as backward, forward, or sideways in simple games such as "Mother, May I."**

****Give toddlers discarded cardboard boxes to climb in and out of, get under, put things in, and play with. Talk about what they are doing: "Where are you? Oh, you are under the box!" Parents can participate too. "Daddy's feet are in the box!"**

****Let your toddler play with pots and pans or plastic kitchen containers, fitting them together**

and putting them away. They will become familiar with shapes and sizes, as well as concepts like *in* and *on*.

****Children need to understand positional words. You can teach these by involving them in household tasks. Teach children a lot of positional words like *above* and *below* in a natural way when you talk with them or give them directions. When picking up toys to put away say, "Please put your toys *into* the yellow basket" or "Put the green washcloth *into* the drawer."**

Next month: Activities for children age 4-5. Activities taken from the U.S. Department of Education publication "Early Childhood: Where Learning Begins Geography."